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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS MUTABAR
TOJIBOYEVA AND AKZAM TURGUNOV

REF: A. TASHKENT 767

[1](#)B. TASHKENT 994

Classified By: Political Officer Tim Buckley for reasons 1.4 (B,D)

Update on the Health of Mutabar Tojiboyeva

[1](#)1. (C) Poloff spoke with German First Secretary Ewe Berndt on September 3 about the health of human rights activist Mutabar Tojiboyeva, who was released from prison in June (ref A). Berndt confirmed that the German Embassy has provided financial support to Tojiboyeva for a medical exam and treatment in Uzbekistan. In addition, he said the German Embassy is actively involved in trying to facilitate her travel to Europe for medical care (related to cancer), although he noted the difficulty in obtaining a necessary exit visa from authorities to depart Uzbekistan. Berndt said, if Tojiboyeva receives permission to travel abroad, it is very important from the German Embassy's standpoint that she return to Uzbekistan at the conclusion of her treatment. He added that he is satisfied by her stated intent to return to Uzbekistan to continue her work.

[1](#)2. (C) Berndt noted that he met with Tojiboyeva two weeks ago along with the German Deputy Chief of Mission. Both diplomats found her to be in surprisingly good health, and Berndt said "she did not seem seriously ill." The doctor who examined her in Namangan at the expense of the German Embassy concurred with this assessment in a phone conversation with Berndt, although they have scheduled a face-to-face meeting to discuss her condition in private.

Update on the Trial of Akzam Turgunov

[1](#)3. (C) Poloff spoke with Dilorom Ishakova on September 4 for an update on the court proceedings against Karakalpakstan activist Akzam Turgunov (ref B). She attended the hearing in Mangit Court earlier in the day, where there were far fewer people in attendance than the initial session. She added that Turgunov's health has visibly deteriorated just in the two weeks since the last court appearance. Ishakova reported

that, in an encouraging development, a witness testified that Turgunov did not accept the USD 375 proffered in local currency in the tea house, which was the basis for the extortion charge. This seems to be a bold hole poked in the prosecution's case, yet Ishakova pessimistically noted that even this may not affect the outcome of the trial. The next hearing is scheduled for September 9 and, to save resources, Ishakova will try to remain in Nukus to attend; she again predicted the trial will drag on for many months. She said that local authorities have not harassed her or obstructed her access to the court proceedings.

Comment:

14. (C) It is good news that Tojiboyeva is receiving financial assistance from the German Embassy and appears to be in decent health while details of her overseas treatment are worked out. The Germans are keen for her to return, and they are probably in the best position of all the like-minded Western Embassies to facilitate her exit permission and travel. Meanwhile, we remain concerned about the flimsy criminal case against Turgunov in Karakalpakstan, and reports of his deteriorating condition suggests he is already doing hard time while hoping for more favorable witness testimony.

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